Kentucky Teacher

No barriers
Students in this primary class work beyond expectations

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

Backstreet Road is a small country — 37 inhabitants — located in Pike County. It's a minisociety in the primary classroom of husband and wife teaching team Roy and Karen Adkins.

While most students get involved in classroom economics projects like Backstreet Road in 4th grade or later, these Millard Elementary primary students already work hard to earn "greens" (the class currency), become entrepreneurs and make decisions about how their classroom operates, with little thought to the age barrier.

The Adkins ensure that their students know no barriers — to learning or to life. About half of their 31 students, ages 5-11, are children with special needs: visual or hearing impairments, behavior problems, Tourette's Syndrome, cerebral palsy and other challenges. The remainder of the class is composed of regular and gifted students. All students learn sign language and use it daily in conversations with one another and their teachers.

Educators throughout the state and country recognize the Adkins' classroom as a model of inclusion. Students are constantly working together, despite differing ages and abilities, to reach a common goal: challenging each other with love and caring to work beyond expectations. Students succeed because their individual needs are being met and they are active participants in their education, the Adkins say.

"Mr. Roy" and "Ms. Adkins" find topics for their students to explore. They guide them in planning, but ultimately the students decide what they want to learn about a topic, how

Teacher Karen Adkins breaks from a lesson to tend to Courtney Coleman's untied shoe while Roy Adkins guides students at another learning center. In their primary classroom at Millard Elementary School, the husband and wife teaching team use diverse instructional methods to meet the individual and sometimes special learning needs of 31 students who range in age from 5 to 11.

Photo by Rick McComb

they will find information and how they will demonstrate their knowledge.

Nearly every student has an individual education plan, and lessons are created accordingly. Students work on content in small groups based on ability, but ages and learning styles can vary within each group.

"We put them in a group where they will excel, not where they will be frustrated," said Mr. Roy. "Students go as fast as they want or as slow as they need to master the skills."

The Adkins have four aides in the classroom. Though the aides are assigned to help certain students with instruction and setting up assistive devices, they also work with others in the groups.

"At the very beginning, I thought adding a lot of children with disabilities would take away from the (primary) program … that we'd be doing a lot of things from the side to help them learn that would take away from the others," Karen told a reporter for the Appalachian News Express earlier this school year. "But it does not. It makes us address the multiple intelligences. We have to teach everything in every way."

The diverse instructional methods are obvious during the class' two-and-a-half-hour language arts session. Students work in six groups spending about 20 minutes at each learning center activity: reading, handwriting, spelling, activities related to the current theme or content, and assigned language arts tasks on the computers.

Each group works on the same content, just in different ways. The students move smoothly from one activity to another. Everyone knows where to go and what to do.

At the spelling table, students alphabetize the week's spelling words. The next group stamps missing letters on worksheets to form the spelling words and practice the letter "e." Lines across the page guide a visually impaired student's eyes during the assignment. Another student practices an additional letter she has yet to master.

At the reading table, Mr. Roy reads to some students, discusses the story and has them answer questions. In another group, the work is more individualized as some students read one book while Mr. Roy works with the rest of the students in a different book.

Students at another table use different approaches to counting candy hearts and graphing the results. Students in one group sort the candy by color and count as they place pieces on a sheet of paper with predrawn boxes. Students in another group work in pairs, with one student sorting and counting the colored candies while the partner makes "tick" marks for each piece. By the end of the lesson, every child completes a titled, color-coded graph of candy pieces.

"It's interesting to watch new students — especially those coming into our class from other schools," said Ms. Adkins. "They're so used to competition, to looking around to see what others are doing, what they can do to get by. Here the child next to them may have three scribbles on a paper and I'll be crowing and making over him. And then I'll demand more of the new student because she's able."

Does this model of inclusiveness

Commissioner's Comments

Proficiency depends on persistence — keeping students in school

By Gene Wilhoit
Education Commissioner

After focusing two columns on literacy and closing the achievement gap between majority and minority student populations, I'm tempted to just say "ditto" this month. Our third priority, reducing dropout rates, could almost take care of itself as we make progress in the first two.

However, our specific attention to dropout prevention is important for many reasons — at least 9,318 reasons in 1998-99. That's how many Kentucky students left school without getting diplomas. Like other dropouts, most are likely to stay close to their hometowns. Most are unqualified for careers with promising futures.

How do we keep our students in school? First, we must recognize that dropping out is not an isolated action but a symptom. At the Department of Education, we are digging deep to get at the root causes. We are focusing on four factors:

1. Early Identification — Research tells us which students are more likely than others to leave school before they graduate:

• students who fall behind academically by two or more grade levels, especially in reading;

• students who are consistently absent or truant;

• students whose families do not value or participate in their education.

With or without the research, most teachers can spot potential dropouts as early as elementary school. The challenge is to combine what we know from research and experience to act early on behalf of at-risk students. We must use proven strategies that excite them about learning, keep them working at or above grade level, and guide them to academic and social success.

2. Literacy — Students who can't read at grade level struggle with course content. Some cover by becoming the class clowns, the loners, the bullies. Others drop out, either by leaving school or by staying but giving up on learning. Either way, they stop growing academically.

3. School Culture and Climate — A student who feels unaccepted, unsupported or unsafe at school considers quitting. A school that creates a culture of mutual respect and inclusion for all, regardless of race, gender, ethnic origin, ability or any other factor, has taken a giant step toward keeping every student in school and engaged in learning.

4. Prevention and Intervention Services — At school, at home and throughout the community, students experience academic, personal, health, family and social problems. Schools and communities working together can develop a variety of strategies and services that address those problems, break barriers and increase each student's chance of success.

Shifting the Focus

We've traditionally looked to high schools to fix the dropout problem. Now we must shift our focus from *inter*vention at the high school level to *pre*vention throughout all grade levels. The Department of Education supports early prevention strategies in a number of ways. Last August, for example, the department awarded grants totaling $940,000 to 23 school districts for the development of model dropout prevention programs. The two-year grants fund a range of activities, most of them in elementary and middle schools. We will be visiting grant sites to offer support and evaluate strategies.

The statewide dropout rate for the 1998-99 school year was 4.97 percent. Our legislators demand that we cut the rate in half by 2006. This is a challenging but important goal. Teachers, you are vital in our efforts to meet it. You know your students. You know how each one learns. You see behaviors and attitudes that could signal problems. Your timely intervention through identification, referral and multiple teaching strategies can make a tremendous difference to many students.

But teachers, you are already overwhelmed by demands unknown to teachers a generation ago. You cannot do this alone. Everyone in your school and in the community has a stake in the success of your students. Families, school counselors and social workers, family resource and youth services center staffs, tutors, mentors and others must be partners.

Community leaders must be involved. Dropout prevention is a social, economic and cultural issue. Early research shows that community programs providing outside-of-school academic support, recreation, cultural enrichment and service learning opportunities have positive effects on the academic success and social behavior of students.

For our students, for our communities and for our state, we must ensure that every student counts. We must ensure that every student stays in school and continues to learn until graduation.

Commissioner Gene Wilhoit invites comments on this topic. Phone him at (502) 564-3141, send him e-mail to *gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us*, or mail correspondence to 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

To learn more about the department's dropout prevention efforts, go to *www.kde.state.ky.us/odss/family/dropout.asp*. For direct assistance, contact Angela Wilkins or Steve Kimberling in the Division of Student, Family and Community Support at (502) 564-3678; *awilkins@kde.state.ky.us* or *skimberl@kde.state.ky.us*. For the community perspective, contact Karen Schmalzbauer at (502) 564-3678 or *kschmalz@kde.state.ky.us*.

Why do students drop out?

Students leaving school before graduation during the 1999-2000 school year cited these reasons:

Reasons	Students
Failure	4,594
Boredom	1,447
Employment	1,078
Conflict	557
Pregnancy	290
Illness	373
Marriage	229
Coursework	153
Total	**8,721**

Wilhoit responds to teachers' comments about expectations and accountability

Dear Readers,

A few educators have written to me regarding my response to a letter published last month in *Kentucky Teacher*. In the letter, a teacher asked me to be more realistic in my expectation that all students can achieve at high levels, regardless of parentage, economics or background.

Because universal understanding of academic expectations and accountability is so important to success in education, I want to clarify the points I made in my response.

First, some readers inferred from my use of the word "parentage" that I consider teachers more important than parents in the development of a child. That is not what I believe. What I intended to communicate was that we can never presume that a child is innately less capable than others simply because of where he or she is born, or to whom.

Poverty and difficult family backgrounds do create barriers to learning — nobody questions that — but those barriers can be overcome. That is the work.

I have toured the state visiting schools three times this school year, and I am about to embark on a fourth tour. During these school visits, I sit down with groups of teachers for two hours or more to have substantive conversations about teaching and learning and to hear their issues and concerns. I want to hear from classroom teachers, because they are the ones who do the real work.

In next month's *Kentucky Teacher,* I plan to outline some observations from my visits to high- and low-performing schools. In the meantime, let m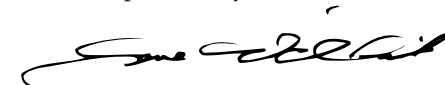e share this: At the high-performing schools I have visited, even those with very high poverty rates, I don't hear teachers telling me that students from certain demographic groups or with certain backgrounds can't be expected to learn as much as other children. I don't hear teachers telling me that some years the students are "good" and some years they are "bad."

Instead, I hear statements like this one, from a teacher at a high-performing school where 87 percent of the students qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch: "Everybody comes in early and stays late, because this is absolutely hard work, but it is contagious at this school. We've got to build the self-perception of a can-do kid." I hear statements like this one, from a teacher at a high-performing school with an 81 percent poverty rate: "We don't short-change our children. It is in our hearts that each one of them can succeed."

In Kentucky, we can no longer accept the excuse that a child from any "disadvantaged" environment is not teachable. I am firmly convinced that parents have a vital role in education, both before their children start school and throughout their school years. However, I am also convinced that excellent teaching can guide students to meet high expectations, even when students come from backgrounds that, statistically speaking, put them at risk of academic failure.

The important conversation taking place in Kentucky has to do with *how* to help all children achieve at high levels. We already know they *can*, because data and experience throughout the state prove they can.

Department launches new 'Parent Page' on the Web

One-stop shopping! That's the best way to describe a new Web site for parents who want information about Kentucky's education system.

The new site is on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site at *www.kde.state.ky.us/parents*. While the site is specifically for parents, it is likely to benefit teachers as well, especially when they're helping parents find answers to questions about public education.

"This Web site lets parents direct questions to education leaders at the department," said Armando Arrastia, the department's Webmaster. "We encourage parents to go first to the local school with questions about their children's education, but we offer this Web site as another avenue for information."

Parents also can use the site to subscribe to periodic e-mailed messages from the department. These "ParentInfo" updates will include department news releases, information about testing activities, and information about the state's education policies and procedures. The messages will also periodically respond to frequently asked questions and timely topics.

The site's links include "Parent Involvement in School," "What You Should Know About Kentucky's Education System," "Tips for Parents," "Frequently Asked Questions," "Help! for Parents" and others.

For example, an "About Your School" link leads to annual school report cards, test scores (both on the Kentucky Core Content Tests and standardized tests) and demographic information about any school in the state.

"We brought parents in very early in the development process to ensure that we would meet their needs with this site," said Arrastia. "We believe the site is off to a good start in that respect."

For more information about the site, contact Armando Arrastia at (502) 564-3421 or at *aarrasti@kde.state.ky.us* (or through the KETS global e-mail list).

For Parents

Photo by Rick McComb

A RISING STAR — Chris Baxter works on a writing assignment at Jefferson County's Kennedy Middle School. Chris participated in last summer's Rising Stars program, which brought students together for activities that prepared them for transition from elementary to middle school. The program will begin its third year this summer. Check the April issue of *Kentucky Teacher* for more about Rising Stars.

Expectations

really cause high student achievement? You be the judge. The first time students completed four years in the Adkins' program and participated in state assessments, five of those students received eight of the school's nine distinguished scores.

The students exiting the Adkins' primary class scored above the national average on the CTBS for 1999-2000.

There also are individual successes. An early primary student is reading at a 4th-grade level, and it's not unusual for students from the class to enter upper elementary with 6th-grade mathematics skills. The Adkins also learned that a student from one of their first classes scored 25 on her ACT in preparation for college. She was a freshman in high school when she posted the score.

For more information about the Adkins' classroom, contact them at (606) 432-5802 or by e-mail at *R_K_Adkins@msn.com*.

They've walked the walk

To understand why students achieve at high levels in Roy and Karen Adkins' primary classes at Millard Elementary in Pike County, you first have to know a little about this husband and wife teaching team. They've overcome a few adversities of their own to become successful.

Karen, an "A" student, dropped out of school to marry Roy. When she decided to go back, the local high school wouldn't admit her because she was married and pregnant. She got her GED.

Education was never a big thing to Roy's family when he was growing up in Pike County. "Men can always find work in the mines," he was told. He graduated from high school by the skin of his teeth.

The Adkins spent much of their married life holding down minimum-wage jobs to support their son. By their mid-30s, they got tired of working for nothing. They realized, Roy said, that the only way to improve life is through education. They went back to school on scholarships and with financial aid to become teachers.

In 1990, Karen started teaching at Millard Elementary as a primary teacher. A year later, Roy finished his degree work in special education and joined the Millard faculty. At first, he worked with special-needs students in a pullout program, teaching them separately from the rest of the students. The second year, he provided special education services to students in regular classrooms.

By the third year, he and Karen decided they wanted to combine their classes into a true primary: multiage and multiability. Though they were really following examples of the Foxfire teaching methods, they quickly found out they were on the cutting edge of education reform's requirement for primary classrooms in Kentucky schools.

That was 1993. Today, Mr. Roy and Ms. Adkins, as the children call them, feel they have found the secret for academic success for all their students. Assisted by four aides, the Adkins provide a safe, nurturing environment in which their 31 students work at their own pace to achieve. Each student is focused on his or her own work, yet they share a sense of community and take care of each other. Together they earn the education that will improve their lives. They all succeed together.

Photo by Rick McComb

Karen Adkins helps Emily Mitchell with a graphing assignment in her primary classroom at Millard Elementary School in Pike County. Adkins and her husband Roy work together to break barriers to learning for every student.

About Primary

Kentucky's Primary Program is an ungraded program that serves children from the time they enter the elementary school program until they enter 4th grade. "Ungraded" does not mean that students' work and progress are not evaluated; it means that students move academically at their own pace without the usual divisions of kindergarten and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade. While in primary, usually for four years, students learn in environments that are appropriate for the developmental level and learning styles of young children. The program's curriculum and instructional design provide a framework for teachers to identify the skills and abilities of each child. In addition, primary teachers establish classroom environments that support individual and group instruction that meet the needs of all children.

Talk to us!

Teachers: *Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail *kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us*

Phone (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372 (toll free in Kentucky)

Fax (502) 564-6470

Write *Kentucky Teacher*
1914 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

8th-graders discover Latin culture through its music and dance

By Faun S. Fishback
Kentucky Department of Education

When shouts of Toma! and Olé! erupted from the South Oldham Middle School gym in early February, not many students thought it odd to hear Spanish and stomping feet coming from the class. That's because it was the third session in which 8th-graders learned components of Latin dance from Mara Maldonado, artistic director of the Ballet Español in Louisville.

For one week of their nine-week physical education class, the 8th-graders learned about salsa and Latin rhythms. They performed flamenco and merengue dance steps. They heard about the cultures that spawned these art forms and watched video clips of authentic dances from operas and movies.

Maldonado, who has studied and performed in this country and Spain, got the students moving and gave them ideas about how to express their feelings through movement. By the third day, students lost their inhibitions and began working in small groups to choreograph their own dances.

Once Maldonado completed the week of instruction, physical education teacher Josh Cravens spent several more days with the students reviewing what they learned before they created their own 32-step dance. Students answered an open-response question in which they described their dance and the feelings they tried to convey through movement. A rubric created for the assignment guided students in the culminating task.

The marriage of physical education, Spanish, dance and culture is the collaborative work of South Oldham Middle's Spanish and drama teacher, Amanda Blanton, and David X. Thurmond, arts and humanities instructional coordinator for Oldham County teachers. Together they wrote a successful Teacher Incentive Program (TIP) grant, offered each year by the Kentucky Arts Council.

TIP supplies matching funds to help teachers bring professionals into Kentucky schools to demonstrate their art forms for students and faculty. In this case, $550 in matching funds allowed Blanton to give South Oldham Middle 8th-graders this experience

Photo by Rick McComb

South Oldham Middle School students learn components of flamenco from Mara Maldonado, artistic director with Ballet Español. In a cross-curricular unit, the 8th-graders learned about Latin dance and culture, created their own 32-step dance and

with the artistic expression of another culture, as well as prepare them for possible arts and humanities questions on this spring's Kentucky Core Content Tests. Every 8th-grader will have the class before April 23, when testing begins.

Initially, Blanton, who has taught for 11 years, focused on her Spanish students. "But not everyone takes Spanish," she said. "Since all 8th-graders must take physical education, this seemed like the place for the instruction to reach more students."

Blanton and Thurmond worked with Cravens and Maldonado to address multiple goals in Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. They developed lesson plans and a students' tool kit that provides the essential question, guiding questions, activities and the Ballet Español's study guide on flamenco dancing.

Cravens, a first-year teacher, said he welcomed the support in teaching dance because he had only one dance class during college. He participated in each session alongside his students, following and learning from Maldonado's instruction. "It has really helped me feel more comfortable teaching dance," he said.

During one session, Blanton and her Spanish students participated in the dance class. She was able to introduce more Spanish vocabulary to all the students and extend discussions of the Latin culture with her foreign language students.

Students seem to enjoy the unit. "I have students dropping by my classroom to tell me how much they liked the dance class," Blanton said. "I learned more about Latin dance, too."

Blanton participated in the summer 2000 Foreign Language Teacher

Academy and learned more about integrating language learning with other disciplines. The academy also showed teachers how to use the Total Physical Response method, a kinesthetic approach to language learning that uses movement, gestures and other elements to increase learning and cognitive development. Having witnessed the value of integrating language learning with other disciplines through this unit, Blanton is looking for ways to repeat the study for 8th-graders next school year.

"This has really grown beyond what we first envisioned," she added. "It just shows that there is a lot to be gained from collaboration!"

STATUS Report

Kentucky may be first in the nation to deliver student evaluation and consultation services to rural schools electronically

You're a teacher in a rural Kentucky school. One of your students has special needs, and you think there may be some kind of technology out there to help this student become a confident and capable learner.

But which one of the dozens of assistive technology devices would meet this student's needs?

If an innovative pilot project continues to show promising results, you'll have expert help with these decisions. Specialists will evaluate your students' assistive technology needs without you, the students or their parents leaving your school or community.

Dr. Debra Bauder from the University of Louisville's Department of Special Education and Preston Lewis from the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Exceptional Children are co-directors of Project STATUS (Student Technology Assessment Through Unique Strategies). The federally funded project is measuring the feasibility of using videoconferencing to provide direct services to rural areas. One such service evaluates students with special needs and recommends assistive technology that would help them learn.

STATUS Phase I used videoconferencing to connect assistive technology specialists in urban areas with students in their classrooms. The project evaluated 28 students without requiring that they travel to the cities.

Lewis described the process: "We used either satellite compressed video technology (the Kentucky Telelinking Network), Web-based camera connections or videophone connections to link directly to rural classrooms. A team of professionals at one of three regional, nonprofit assistive technology centers observed and conducted live, individualized assessments. Teachers were involved in the entire process, and parents were part of the team during 90 percent of the assessments."

STATUS Phase II is examining the project's quality of service, impact on students and cost effectiveness. Once that step is completed and an implementation manual is developed and field tested, materials and procedures for providing assistive technology assessment via videoconference will be available to any agency anywhere. Project STATUS findings and products will be available by October of 2002.

Lewis considers STATUS a first in the state and possibly in the nation. "For some time, Kentucky has used technology to deliver training or technical assistance from one location to another, but not for delivering direct services such as this," he said. "I think Kentucky is first in the nation to deliver assistive technology assessment services to rural areas using videoconferencing. The success of this effort means that the technology could be used to deliver a host of services to rural areas."

For more information, contact Lewis at (502) 564-4970 or *plewis@kde.state.ky.us* or Debra K. Bauder at (502) 852-0564 or *bauder@louisville.edu*. On the Web, go to *www.louisville.edu/edu/edsp/projects/status.html*.

Photo by Rick McComb

SELF-PORTRAITS — Students present their self-perceptions in artwork at Hager Preschool Center in Owensboro. March is National Youth Art Month. For information about art education in Kentucky, contact Philip Shepherd at (502) 564-2106 or *pshepher@kde.state.ky.us*, or contact Jimmie Dee Kelley at *njdkelley@cs.com*.

March is Development Disabilities Awareness Month

For a preview into how assistive technology can be used to help students with disabilities access the general curriculum, check out the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) at the Center for Applied Special Technology (*www.cast.org*).

On Page 7 in this issue, "New to the 'Net" guides teachers to resources for using the World Wide Web to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Watch future issues for an update on a pilot project that is exploring the uses of assistive technology for teaching and testing students with disabilities.
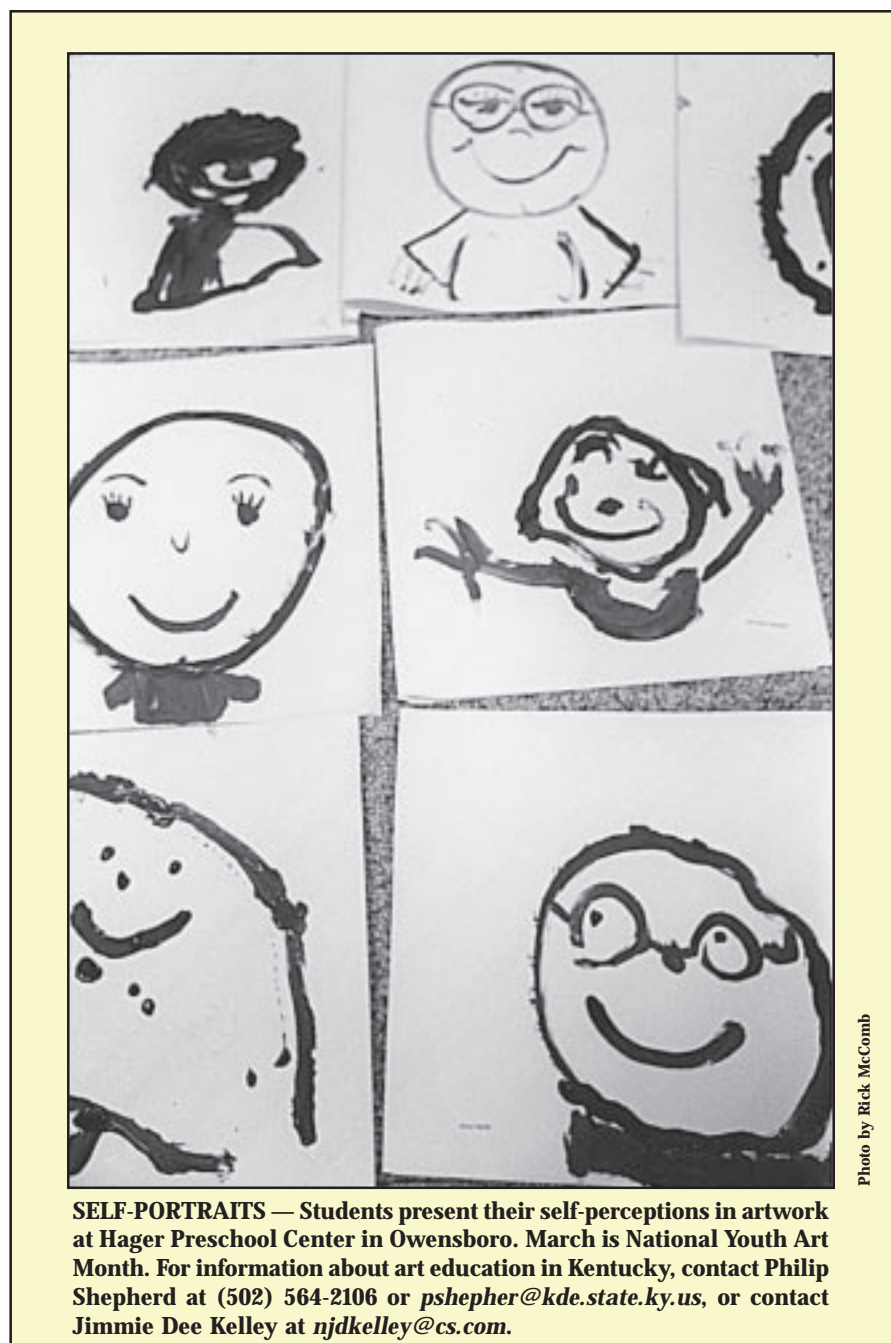
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New to the 'Net Lesson 7:

How can I use the Web to meet special needs?

By Fran Salyers
Kentucky Department of Education

Welcome back to New to the 'Net. In this lesson . . .
• Learn how to use the Web to find software and hardware to meet specific learning needs.

• Learn how to link those products with the needs of students in your classroom.

• Find funding for putting those products in your classroom or school.

• Find Web sites that can be great resources for students with disabilities.

To locate Lesson 7 online, select the New to the 'Net main page in your online bookmarks list, or go to the Kentucky Department of Education's home page (*www.kde.state.ky.us*) and click on the mascot "Newt," then click on the Lesson 7 link.

What are 'special needs?'

If you think of "special needs" as a category for students with disabilities, consider broadening your definition. In addition to thinking of the student who is deaf, consider the hearing student who doesn't pay attention to a word you say but understands concepts when she works with her hands. As you think about the student whose poor vision prevents him from reading a book, think about the non-reader who learns best when following the text while a person or a computer reads aloud the portion of the text the student cannot read independently.

Think about all of the students who "learn differently." Those are the students who can benefit from technology designed to meet their needs. The Web is your gateway to information about special-needs technology (usually called assistive technology or AT), how it can help, where you can get it and how you can find money to pay for it. The Web can help you use technology to open the world to students with any type of disability or those with different learning needs and styles. Technology can help you make all students confident and capable learners.

Getting Started

Once you get to the Lesson 7 page, click on the Department of Education's "Assistive Technology Resources in Kentucky" (*www.kde.state.ky.us/oet/customer/at/*).

This site leads to information about available services and devices — from the simple to the complex — to help students learn and live more independently. Click on the page's main menu items:

◆ Assistive Technology Centers: Who, What and Where — an introduction to four independent, nonprofit resources within the Kentucky Assistive Technology Service Network.

◆ Assistive Technology Matrix — an aid for determining which of thousands of products will meet your students' needs and be compatible with the KETS workstations in your school. The matrix, one of the only resources of its type in the nation, lets you browse the entire database or search in multiple ways to find devices to meet specific needs. This can help an Individual Educational Plan team identify assistive technology needed to implement an IEP. Take advantage of the AbleData and Closing the Gap links, too.

◆ Assistive Technology Funding Book — a guide to national and state funding sources for buying assistive technology.

◆ Other Assistive Technology Resources

Also visit another Department of Education Web resource, the Assistive Technology Guidelines for Kentucky Schools. This document helps with identifying and meeting student needs for assistive technology as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with specific examples for classroom implementation.

Another Kentucky Resource

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Service Network is a statewide collaboration of organizations and individuals that makes assistive technology information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age or disability. Click on "KATS"*(www.katsnet.org/*) to tap this resource.

AT and Assessment

Did you know that students who need assistive technology to learn can use some of those same learning tools when taking state core content tests? This option applies to students in these categories:

◆ students with disabilities (i.e., those with IEPs or 504 Plans);

◆ students who have temporary medical conditions that necessitate accommodations or modifications or both.

To learn more about using technology during state assessments, click on "AT and Assessment" on the Lesson 7 page.

Next Step

Want to venture beyond Kentucky sites to find some of the best assistive technology resources on the Web? On the Lesson 7 page, click on "AT Links." You'll think you've struck gold!

Coming in April

Lesson 8: More of Newt's favorite web sites for teaching and learning.

❈

New to the 'Net started in the August 2000 issue of *Kentucky Teacher*. If you have questions about the series or need copies of Lessons 1-6, go to *www.kde.state.ky.us* on the Internet and click on Newt, the course mascot, or send a request to *Kentucky Teacher*, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; *kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us*.

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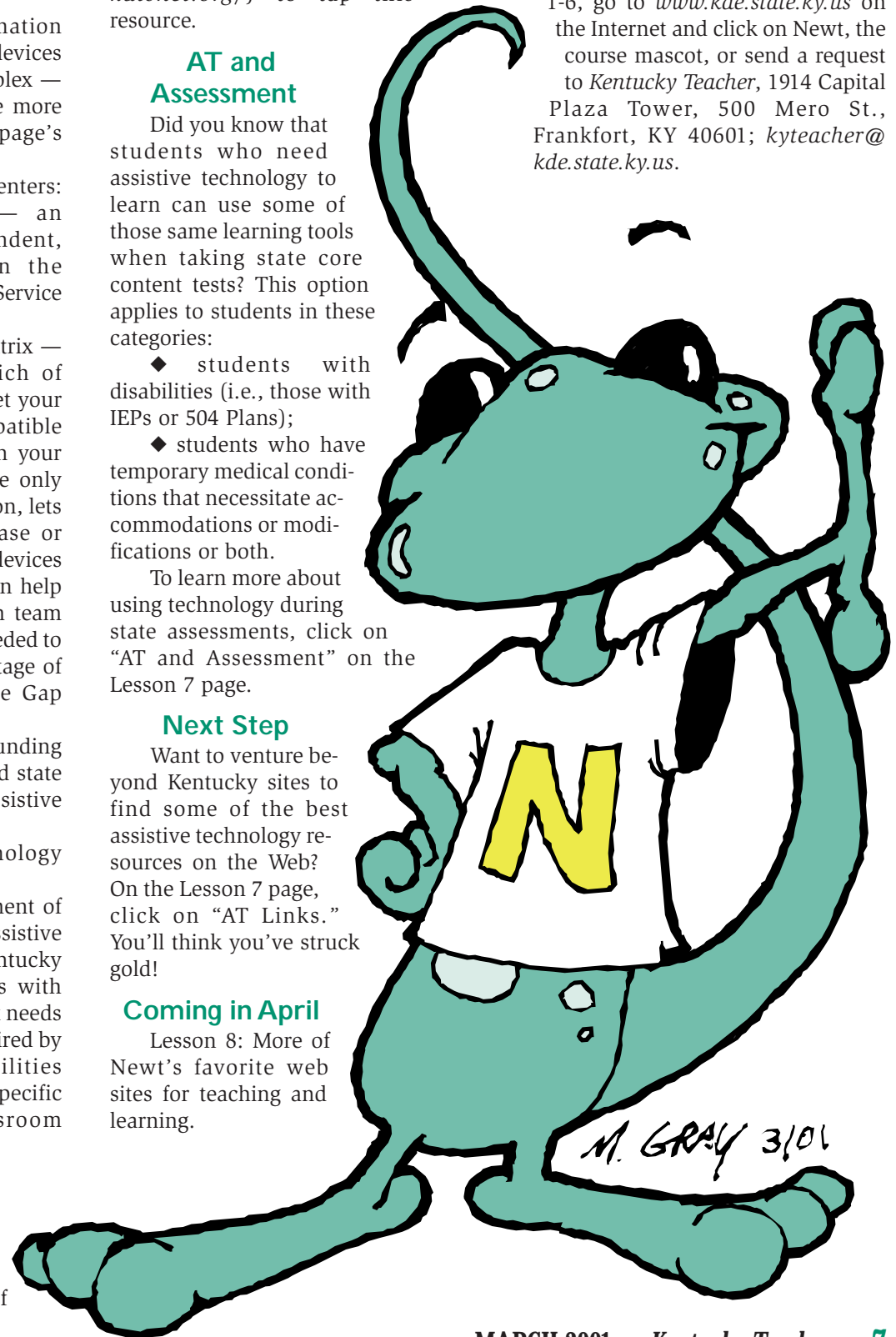
JUST DO IT!

CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS SPURS KENTUCKY TO ESTABLISH A NEW CAREER CLUSTER

COURSE SEQUENCES LINK WITH KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM MAJORS AND OFFER COLLEGE CREDIT TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By Sharon Crouch Farmer
Kentucky Department of Education

Information technology, known in this abbreviation-prone world as "IT," may be the fastest growing employment opportunity in the nation and the premium fuel for the nation's economy. IT workers help ensure that computers work. Fifty percent of all jobs are in two positions that exist in almost every organization: technical support and network administration. So reports the Information Technology Association of America. According to Kentucky Works! (formerly known as the Workforce Investment Board), Louisville alone has a shortage of 3,200 IT professionals.

To address the critical shortage of workers in this field, the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Career and Technical Education has added information technology as a new career cluster. The division is completing an implementation guide to help schools get started. Course sequences link with majors in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and offer college credit to high school students.

Some schools are already ahead of the game.

EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL

This Jefferson County school is addressing the local demand for information technology professionals head-on. Eastern High requires all students to take a minimum of two IT courses to graduate.

"We view every student as a technology student," said Scott Horan, Eastern's school technology coordinator. "Everyone has the opportunity to incorporate technology into their career plans."

How does the school do it?

Eastern used local resources to build a 10-member IT department. Donations and student-built machines fill 14 computer labs to accommodate 1,400 students in at least one full-time class per

Photo by Rick McComb

Student Jason Eisenmenger does last-minute studying as teacher Scott Horan sets up a test that will measure Jason's progress in an information technology course at Eastern High School. Eastern is one of a growing number of schools preparing students to meet a high demand for IT professionals in Kentucky and nationwide.

day. As sophomores, students choose one of seven IT majors toward which they will commit at least one period per day in the remaining two years of high school. Students who complete four years of computer courses receive a certificate of mastery on their diplomas and transcripts. They can also become Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers, thanks to the help of a local IT corporation, Kizan, and Jefferson County's School-to-Careers program. They provided formal MCSE training and helped Eastern become a testing center for the MCSE certification and for the A+/Network+ certification offered by the Computing Technology Industry Association.

"The A+ certification validates an individual's technical skills without being tied to a particular vendor," Horan said. "Passing it is one of my students' biggest 'rushes.'" The school recently turned out its 35th successful certification (four NT4 Server, four NT4 Workstation, two Network+ and 25 A+ certifications) and its 58th IT intern (with 29 companies).

Eastern's IT program entails classroom training for freshmen and sophomores, followed by summer internships with local businesses that pay students $8 an hour. The internships give students a platform to use what they've learned and test their interest in pursuing a technology career. They also give students valuable experience in a business environment, while employers get good prospects for future employees.

Like this one . . .

"He looked like a budding rock star, his record of attendance was mediocre, but he was persistent," says Horan of a student (we'll call him Jesse) who kept asking until Horan signed him on for a certification class.

Jesse struggled at first but worked his way through the texts and excelled in fixing computer hardware. "He was one of our first interns, but he had to turn the opportunity down because he had no transportation to and from the job site," said Horan. "He joined a rock band instead."

Jesse continued the coursework, though, and was eventually hired by a large insurance company closer to home. The company's chief information officer took him under his wing, and Jesse has been with the same com-

pany for a year and a half.

"Jesse now pulls new interns under *his* wing," said Horan. He leaves school for work at 11 a.m. and spends the day preparing for a college career that the company will be paying for. Jesse is going to work, going to class and making the grades.

"The budding rock star turned into a real IT professional with a great future," Horan said.

Pulaski County

Entering the arena of IT education in public schools was a community decision in Pulaski County. After following a standard model for a modular technology education program for about a year, the district redesigned the program to meet local needs.

"A community survey by the Somerset/Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce and other organizations indicated that computer skills lead the list of training needs," said Mike Crowhurst, an instructor in the Computer Technology Academy at Pulaski County High School. Industry needed workers with skills in computer graphics and networking, computer-aided drafting and desktop publishing as well as basic applications such as word processing, spreadsheets and databases.

Pulaski County signed on with the Novell Education Academic Partnership Program. Novell offers participating schools the same instructional kits it sells to the corporate world, but at a reduced price. Software and instructor training are also part of the package.

Instructor training requires teachers to meet higher standards than industry professionals. "I studied side by side with industry professionals and had to pass the same tests, but I had to get a higher score," said Crowhurst.

Pulaski County's Computer Technology Academy is the heart of the district's information technology program. This career major has an academic core. It requires six to eight computer technology classes, membership in the Student Technology Leadership Program and two professional certifications. Students may earn the rank of Certified Novell Administrator, Certified Novell Engineer and Certified Novell Internet Business Strategist, as well as Computing Technology Indus-

try Association certifications in Network+ and I-Net+.

Students recently opened a help desk at the high school, offering everything from Web development to basic computer repair and technical support for teachers. They also are taking those skills out into the community.

"A recent graduate spent his senior year working as the Webmaster for a group of five radio stations," Crowhurst said. "Another did technical work for the Center for Rural Development in Somerset."

The school's IT program deliberately addresses the issue of gender equity. "When the information technology program started, we had 89 male students and 11 female students," said Crowhurst. A two-year gender equity grant from the Division of Career and Technical Education helped turn Pulaski's program into a full department with gender-balanced classrooms. Enrollments in the two years following the study were 52 and 51 percent female, respectively. "Since then, we have maintained an enrollment with no less than 40 percent female students every year but one," he said.

A student entrepreneur

At this point, one of the biggest problems Aaron Denney is trying to solve is how to structure his company, Access Extreme. He knows about the revenue stream, he knows the costs of equipment and services, but what about taxes and social security? These

are unusual issues for a 16-year-old, but the junior at Pulaski County High School Computer Technology Academy has learned his lessons well and believes the time for opportunity is *now*.

"I began working with Web pages and found a few companies that wanted me to do that kind of work," Denney said. "More recently I have found companies that are looking for network wiring and other kinds of setup. We've done these kinds of things at school, and I have built a network at home, so it seemed simple enough to do for a business."

Denney's business now includes computer repair and consulting, network design and installation, and setting up e-commerce Web sites. He hopes to offer dial-up ISP services soon.

"My goal is to benefit the public by offering low-cost services to both businesses and consumers," said Denney. "I also hope to one day set up a 20- to 30-computer lab which could be used for educational and entertainment purposes."

Wonder what this guy will do for a senior project?

For More Information . . .

• Scott Horan, Eastern High School, (502) 485-8243, *shoran1@bellsouth.net*
• Mike Crowhurst, Pulaski County, *(606) 679-1574, mcrowhurst @pulaski.k12.ky.us*
• Novell Web site, *www.novell.com/education/neapinfo*

Photo by Rick McComb

Students Laura Jenks and Derrick Smith move a computer's central processing unit as they organize equipment used in Eastern High School's information technology program. The school requires all students to take a minimum of two courses in the high-demand IT field.

A Decade of Difference

Careful but unmistakable changes bring solid results at Lafayette High

This urban school with traditions spanning more than a half-century is changing the way it does things. Teachers now offer students more active learning and less "sit and get." The results are solid. In 2000, Lafayette students scored in the 70s or 80s in four of the seven core content areas.

By Jim Parks
Kentucky Department of Education

Fayette County's Lafayette High School has a 60-year tradition of excellence in academics and athletics. Championship trophies grace its display cases, and history teacher Michael Fogos decorates his classroom with pennants his former students send from the colleges they attend. Literally and figuratively, Fogos is dangling higher education in front of his high school students.

Tradition discourages change, and Fayette County had a strong tradition of central office decision making. But as part of statewide reform, change is happening at Lafayette. To Roxanne Foose, a 17-year teacher at the school, the most significant change is school-based decision making. During her first decade of teaching there, the district office decided everything from who the next principal would be to how many aides the cafeteria would have.

Five years ago, when Foose was a member of the school council, she had the opportunity to help choose a new principal. After surveying parents and the faculty, the council hired Mike McKenzie. McKenzie and the council, working with the community, started making changes at Lafayette. They converted two cafeteria aide positions into a teacher position. To help fill the gap, McKenzie does lunchroom duty himself, mingling daily with the school's 1,600 students.

Teachers work together to select textbooks, and they have a role in recommending new faculty members.

The school, which in the early days of reform focused on writing in all classes, has added reading to its focus. Every teacher in every class — mathematics, science, social studies — emphasizes reading. At monthly faculty meetings, a reading specialist presents short lessons on reinforcing reading skills in all classes.

At departmental meetings, the focus has shifted to who is teaching what in the state core content. The idea is to make sure everything is covered.

On a snowy day in January 2000, students in Foose's senior English class were preparing to write a research paper based on the book "Frankenstein." In writing the book, author Mary Shelley was imagining the potential consequences of early-1800s scientific discoveries. The assignment in Foose's class was to write about the potential consequences of today's scientific findings. The vocabulary list for the assignment included "cloning," "eugenics" and "cryogenic freezing." The assignment spanned literature, social studies and science.

On the same day, Robyn Reid's freshman social studies class was the "Senate" in the Lafayette High School Mock Congress. Students played all the roles of the real Congress and abided by the rules of congressional debate, including being civil and not speaking until recognized. The "Senate" was considering bills passed by the "House," portrayed by another freshman social studies class. The bills concerned smoking in restaurants, wearing motorcycle helmets and same-sex marriages. The discussion was lively but, for the most part, decorous. Only a couple of times did all of the students try to speak at once.

Then a student called a proposal "stupid." Reid advised him to express his thoughts in terms such as "ill-advised" or "misinformed." The next time a "stupid" bill came up, the student rose to speak again. "This bill is," he said, pausing to look at his teacher, "what was one of those words you used?"

Principal McKenzie sees these activities as examples of a shift in teaching, a lot more active learning, a lot less "sit and get."

The results are solid. In 2000, Lafayette students scored in the 70s or 80s in four of the seven core content areas, giving the school an overall score just short of 75.

"And we are just getting started," McKenzie said.

For more information about Lafayette High's success, contact the principal, Mike McKenzie, by phone at (859) 381-3474 or by e-mail at *mmckenzi@fayette.k12.ky.us* or through the KETS global list.

The print edition of "Results Matter: A Decade of Difference in Kentucky's Public Schools" is available for $15 per copy. To order, phone Windy Newton at (502) 564-3421; send e-mail to *wnewton@kde.state.ky.us*; or write to the Department of Education Bookstore, 19th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601. To order online, go to *www.kde.state.ky.us/comm/pubinfo/bookstore/* (click "Browse and Order Online," then "Education Reform").

Anne Rebuck (left) and Jenny Hamilton work with frozen cultures in a chemistry lab at Lafayette High School. Shea Douglas (top of page) ponders a concept during a precalculus class.

"There be dragons … "

Middle-schoolers learn history and more by creating symbols of Chinese culture

By Glenda J. Conner
Resource Teacher
Grant County Middle School

Ancient cartographers labeled maps of uncharted areas with the ominous words, "There be dragons beyond." If they had been describing Jamey Dalzell's 7th-grade social studies classroom at Grant County Middle School, they would have been correct.

As part of a unit on China, Dalzell was looking for a way to make Chinese culture come alive in an imaginative, hands-on approach to learning. He decided to incorporate art into the lesson. After guiding students to information about the symbolic significance of dragons in Chinese culture, he gave them chicken wire, papier-mâché materials, paint and a time limit of six days to create their own Chinese dragons.

Instead of merely memorizing facts about China, students learned about the nation's history and traditions and used their new knowledge to design and build dragons. By working in groups of four or five to create their symbols of Chinese culture, the students gained insight into the differences and similarities between China and the United States.

They paraded their dragons through the school on Chinese New Year's Day, Jan. 24, while other students, teachers and administrators lined the hallways to admire the handiwork.

"Involving others at the school as spectators provided an authentic audience and added significance to the assignment," Dalzell said.

The focus of the project allowed students to evaluate how the Western celebration of the New Year varies from its Eastern counterpart and examine the reasons for the differences in how the two cultures view the same event.

Dalzell reports that the amount of learning was "tremendous" in this unconventional lesson, which relied more on active learning than on pencil-and-paper activities. He tied the lesson to several Kentucky learning goals and expectations, including Social Studies Goal 2.19: "Students understand, analyze and interpret historical events, conditions, trends and issues to develop historical perspective."

Just as important, he said, was the opportunity for students to "demonstrate positive growth in self-concept through appropriate tasks or projects" (Goal 3.1) and learn to work cooperatively with others. In addition, special-education students and other students who do not process information in a conventional manner were able to shine artistically and participate on an even footing with others.

The unit on China was very much an example of collaborative instruction and integrated curriculum. With guidance from science teacher Anna Ray Martin, students learned about Chinese inventors. With mathematics teacher Kristy Moore, students did activities involving Chinese currency. In Denise Smith's and Patty Kurz's language arts classes, students wrote oriental poetry and displayed their work on Chinese box kites. Art teacher Carol Guffey directed the design of hallway murals that included Chinese writing and paintings.

A writing assignment concluded the project. Students composed essays comparing and contrasting Chinese and American ideas of celebrating New Year's and explaining the use of symbolism in Chinese culture.

Dalzell offers this advice to any teacher who would like to incorporate dragon making into their lessons on China: "Plan everything in advance, and consider the costs involved," he said. "Also, be prepared for an untidy classroom for the duration of the project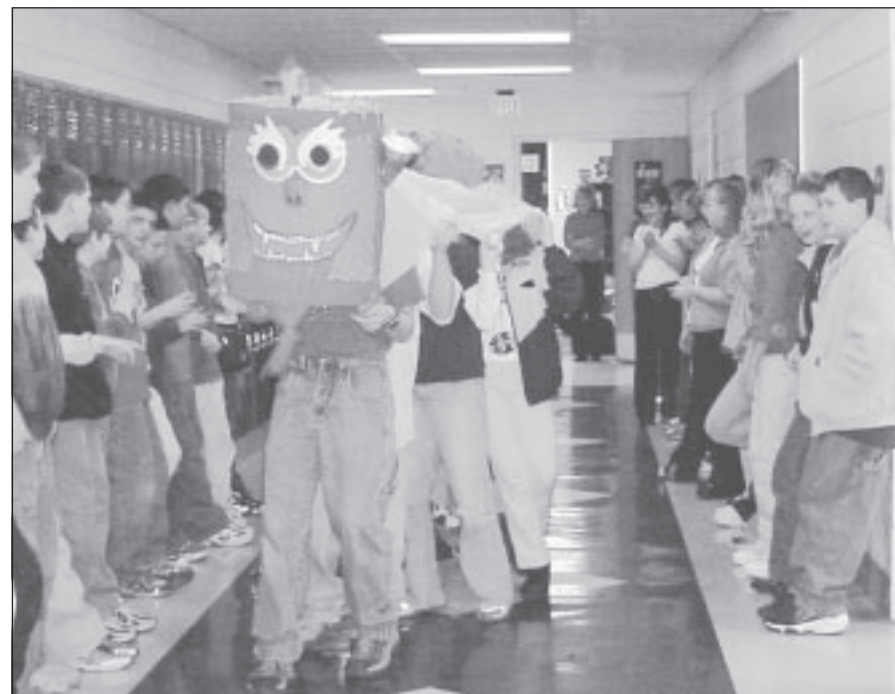. Garbage bags taped to the floor at each work station helped somewhat to reduce the mess that was a necessary part of the creative process."

This was the first year Dalzell used dragon making in his lesson plan. He considers it so successful that he plans to make it an annual tradition.

To request a free copy of the lesson plan or to ask questions or make comments, send an e-mail message to Dalzell through the KETS global list or to *jdalzell@grant.k12.ky.us*.

A student-created, student-powered dragon parades through the halls of Grant County Middle School to an appreciative audience. Seventh-graders created several dragons during a study of China that crossed multiple core content areas.

Photo Courtesy Grant County Schools

Ashland's commitment to integration introduces teachers to technology

by Emilia Simoes-McArtor
Ashland Independent Schools

Editor's Note: Emilia Simoes-McArtor is director of technology and English as a Second Language coordinator for the Ashland district.

The integration of curriculum with technology is the primary focus of a joint venture under way between two Ashland Independent schools.

Educators at Verity Middle School and Blazer High School launched Project Venture based on national research findings validating that technology activities must be an integral part of instruction. The research showed that the use of technology in isolation from meaningful classroom curriculum does not have a positive impact on student achievement.

In Project Venture, Verity and Blazer have set out to train a cadre of master teachers in grades 7 and 8 who will model effective practices for technology integration. The project uses comprehensive professional development to help teachers become pioneers in the use of technology.

Project Venture has three main goals:

• to increase the number of teachers trained to use technology effectively for teaching and learning;

• to develop and implement curriculum materials that use technology integration and are aligned with state and national standards;

• to implement a continuing evaluation protocol that assists with project refinement and implementation and ensures sustainability and replication by the end of the project.

Teachers had several incentives to apply, including a classroom computer and access to a shared laptop and multimedia projector purchased with state and local technology funds. Thirty teachers applied.

"Teachers are hungry for the newest technology," said Blazer Principal Janice Ledford. "When they learned they would receive laptops and multimedia projectors if chosen for the project, we had more applications than we needed. The teachers in this program are excited about their training and the possibilities for their individual classrooms."

Of the 30 applicants, 17 teachers from various content areas in grades 7-12 were chosen to participate. They may receive professional development credit or extra earnings for the time they devote to two-hour collaborative workshops conducted each month by district technology coordinator Emilia Simoes-McArtor and Blazer High technology coordinator Cary Williams. The workshops address new strategies for technology integration. Technology mentors Jeff Carroll from Blazer and Vicki Hanshaw from Verity follow up with teachers between monthly workshops, working with them during planning periods or outside of school hours.

One participant, Blazer High business teacher Sue Chaffin, said she applied because of the incentives but has found other benefits to the project. "I've discovered that although equipment is a terrific addition to my classroom, learning specific applications is even better," she said.

She passes her new technology skills on to her students. "It's wonderful," she said, "to watch them catch the excitement of creating PowerPoint presentations and Web pages to support their learning."

Donna Cox, a language arts teacher at Verity, said the project has broadened her technology skills. "Prior to Project Venture, the extent of my computer experience was in word processing only," she said. "I feel much more familiar now with the myriad computer applications for my classroom."

Another participant, Blazer English teacher Kevin Stepp, has used PowerPoint to illustrate the parts and composition of the senior portfolio to students in Practical English classes. After showing them the presentation and measuring how much it helped increase their understanding of the portfolio requirements and process, he asked the students to suggest ways he could make the presentation more effective for other senior classes. "Their suggestions were candid, clear and helpful," Stepp said.

From this cadre of 17 intensively trained teachers, the district hopes to reap additional technology mentors for middle and high schools.

A similar professional development project may also be initiated at elementary schools next year.

For more information about Project Venture or technology in Ashland Independent Schools, contact Emilia Simoes-McArtor at (606)327-2706, ext. 2733, or send e-mail to *emcartor@ashland.k12.ky.us* or through the KETS global list. The Ashland Independent district technology plan is available on the Web at *www.ashland.k12.ky.us*.
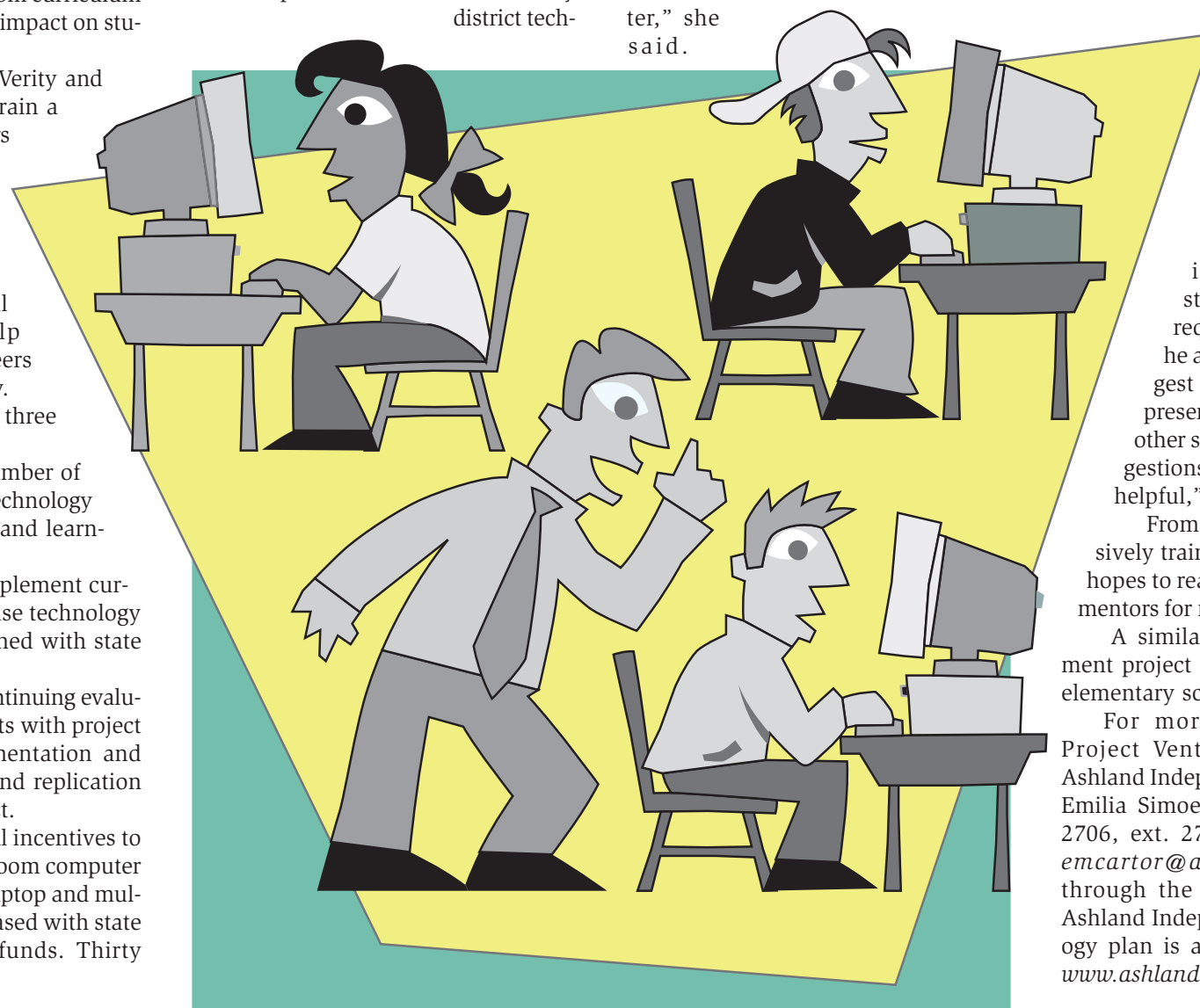
KDE wins national awards for products about reform

A documentary video and a photo exhibit about education reform in Kentucky have won first-place awards from the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC).

"Education Reform: A Decade of Difference," a video produced by the Department of Education's Division of Media Services, won a first-place Gold Screen Award. The half-hour program tracks the history of public education in Kentucky and the events leading up to the passage of House Bill 940 — the Kentucky Education Reform Act — in 1990. The narrator is Kentucky native Bob Edwards, host of National Public Radio's "Morning Edition."

"Faces of Reform 1990-2000," an exhibit of 22 photographs by Department of Education photographer Rick McComb, won a first-place Blue Pencil Award. McComb selected the color and black-and-white photos from those he took during the first 10 years of reform. The freestanding, four-panel display has been on exhibition at the state fair, state parks and other locations throughout the state.

NAGC conducts the annual Blue Pencil/Gold Screen Awards Competition to recognize excellence in writing, photography, publication design, video and broadcasting. Local, state and federal government agencies throughout the nation compete for the awards, which this year were presented on March 8 in Denver at the association's national conference.

"Education Reform: A Decade of Difference" is available in VHS format for $15 per tape. To order, contact Windy Newton at (502) 564-3421 or *wnewton@kde.state.ky.us*, or visit the Department of Education Bookstore at *www.kde.state.ky.us/comm/pubinfo/bookstore/.*

"Faces of Reform 1990-2000" is available for display by school districts, community groups and others. To reserve the exhibit for local use, contact Joanna Crim at (502) 564-3421 or *jcrim@kde.state.ky.us.*

Photo Courtesy Kentucky History Center

FABULOUS FIFTIES? — Annie Denny and Greg Hardison travel back to the 1950s in a 15-minute play, "Red, White and Black." Part of the "Front Page Fifties" exhibition at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort, the play explores multiple viewpoints of a racially motivated bombing that occurred in a Louisville suburb in 1954. The exhibition and the play continue through August. The Kentucky Historical Society recommends the play to middle and high school groups studying the civil rights movement and the Red scare. To schedule a visit that includes a performance, contact Carol McGurk at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4461, or *carol.mcgurk@mail.state.ky.us.*

Virtual High School announces new address, phone numbers

The staff of the Kentucky Virtual High School has relocated. Send correspondence to KVHS, Kentucky Department of Education, 19th Floor Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

To reach a specific staff member, phone (502) 564-4772 and use the following extension numbers, or send e-mail through the KETS global list or to these direct addresses:

• Director Linda Pittenger, extension 4532; *lpitteng@kde.state.ky.us*

• Terri DeYong, extension 4516; *tdeyong@kde.state.ky.us*

• Robert Hackworth, extension 4552; *rhackwor@kde.state.ky.us*

• Bob Fortney, extension 4527; *bfortney@kde.state.ky.us*

To phone toll free, call (866) 432-0008. The fax number is (502) 564-6470.

EKU Natural Areas Web page links to environmental sites

Eastern Kentucky University's Division of Natural Areas now offers links on its Web site to a variety of environmental education resources for students and teachers. The links provide information on biodiversity, conservation organizations, and state and federal natural resources agencies.

Topics range from wildlife conservation, environmental health and cultural issues in the Southern Appalachians to mining, watershed management and agriculture. A link to NatureServe, an online encyclopedia, supplies a source for conservation information on plants, animals and ecological communities in the U.S. and Canada.

The Web site also contains photographs and information about the three natural areas managed and protected by the university: Lilley Cornett Woods in Letcher County, Maywoods Environmental and Educational Laboratory in Garrard County, and Pilot Knob State Preserve in Powell County.

The Web address is *www.naturalareas.eku.edu.* For more information about the links and the university's natural areas, call the Division of Natural Areas office at (859) 622-1476.

Honk if you love art!

Photo Courtesy Owensboro Public Schools

With the exterior decorations complete, a decommissioned school bus awaits installation of work stations, shelves and other features that will transform it into a mobile art classroom serving all nine Owensboro Independent schools. The art bus will be ready to roll later this spring.

A decommissioned school bus has a new and colorful career in the Owensboro school district. Fine and performing arts specialist Julie White and art education facilitator Brian Murphy, with assistance from auto body painters, transformed the bus into a mobile art classroom and gallery.

All nine of Owensboro's schools have art facilities, but the new mobile facility will offer art opportunities that individual schools cannot provide. Murphy says the possibilities for using the bus to expand art education are "limitless."

The exterior artwork features a visual art time line from caveman drawings through computer generated graphics. The art interprets famous masterpieces that are part of the district's visual art skills continuum.

The interior of the bus is a study of color theory using primary and secondary colors. Shelves hold art supplies, and permanent frames display student work and reproductions of masterpieces. Individual workstations provide a variety of materials such as clay, paint, crayons, markers, scissors, brushes, glue and paper. The art bus is a self-contained mobile art classroom. Once it starts rolling later this spring, it will pull up to each school site and give students a new and creative workspace.

The art bus will also be an outreach tool as it travels to the mall, the performing arts center and area businesses. Student artwork produced on the bus will be on display in the district's board office.

The bus, which is accessible to students with disabilities, has new heating and cooling units plus a sink. AC plug-ins permit the use of overhead and slide projectors.

"Exposing all of our students to varied styles of visual art and identifying students who show talent in this mode of expression is important," said arts specialist White. "We know that when we teach using the multiple-intelligence theory, more of our students will be successful."

The Owensboro Board of Education and Superintendent Carolyn McGaughey donated the bus to the district's fine arts program.

For more information, contact Julie White at (270) 686-1000 or *jwhite@owensboro.k12.ky.us* or through the KETS global e-mail list.

THE Bulletin Board

By Lisa York Gross
Kentucky Department of Education

KYSPRA Spring Retreat set for April 24 and 25

This year's Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA) spring retreat will be April 24 and 25 at Shaker Village-Pleasant Hill in Harrodsburg. The deadline for registration and room reservations is April 5. Fees of $42 for KYSPRA members and $47 for non-members cover breakfast and lunch on the first day and breakfast on the second day. Dress is casual.

To register or request details, go to *www.livingweb.com/kyspra* on the Web or contact Linda Salyer, Daviess County Public Schools, (270) 685-3161; *lsalyer@daviess.k12.ky.us*

Murray State accepting nominations for Outstanding Teacher award

Murray State University is accepting nominations for the sixth annual Kentucky Outstanding Teacher Award, which will present $1,000 to one full-time teacher at each of the general grade levels: primary/elementary, middle grades and high school.

A letter of nomination must include one section on each of three criteria: demonstrated excellence in teaching, contributions to parental involvement in learning and commitment to school excellence. The letter must be no more than three double-spaced typed pages in length. Include the nominator's name, title, address, telephone number and relationship to the nominee, plus a letter of support from an administrator in the nominee's district.

The deadline for nominations is April 13. The winner will be announced in May. Mail nominations to Dean's Office/Education, Murray State University, PO Box 9, Murray, KY 42071-0009.

CONTACTS: Terry Waltman, (270) 762-3832; Susan Marinoff, (270) 762-3817

KAPT helps with tuition

Kentucky's Affordable Prepaid Tuition (KAPT) provides a saving plan for parents or others who wish to prepare early for a child's higher education. KAPT guarantees tuition at any accredited Kentucky college, university or technical school in exchange for early tuition purchase, either by lump sum or monthly payments. The prepayment caps tuition costs at today's rates.

KAPT offers three plans to guarantee tuition prices at community colleges, public universities and private institutions. While the guarantee does not apply to students who choose colleges out of state, participants are able to apply the full Kentucky tuition amount toward those schools.

Taxes on earnings of KAPT accounts are deferred until the tuition credits are used, when it is taxed at the student's tax rate. For details, visit *www.kytreasury.com/html/kyt_prepaid.html.*

CONTACT: Rachel Burg Belin, State Treasurer's Office, Suite 183, Capitol Annex, Frankfort, KY 40601; (866) 333-KAPT (333-5278); RachelBurg.Belin @mail.state.ky.us

Social studies mini-conference set for July 16 and 17

"A Kentucky Journey" mini-conference for teachers of intermediate-grades social studies is scheduled for July 16 and 17 at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. Co-sponsored by the Kentucky Council for the Social Studies, the Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Geographic Alliance, the conference will feature sessions on these topics:

• using museums and primary source material to teach Kentucky history;

• using photos to teach the five themes of geography;

• curriculum materials for teaching about the state's economy, environment, Native Americans and the government;

• using literature to teach about Kentucky;

• teaching about the culture of Kentucky.

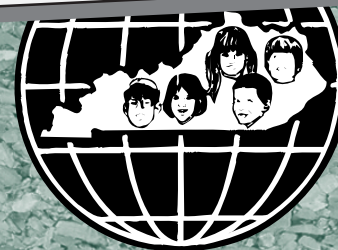The conference will begin at 12:30 p.m. on July 16 and conclude by early afternoon the next day. The fee is $50.

CONTACT: Robin Chandler or Marcia Lile, (502) 564-2106; *rchandle@kde.state.ky.us* or *mlile@ kde.state.ky.us*

Summer Technology Institute planned for Lexington

Forward in the Fifth will sponsor its second annual Technology Institute July 11-13 at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Fayette County. Participants will learn how to develop a Web page; how to incorporate the Internet into instruction and research; how to use several software programs for instructional purposes; and how to use multimedia software and hardware for multiple purposes. One series of sessions is designed for school technology coordinators.

Registration is $400 for individuals and $1,000 for teams of three from the same school, district or organization. The registration fee includes breakfast and lunch each day. The deadline for registration is May 29. Register online at *www.fif.org/calendar_of_events.htm.*

CONTACT: Shawnta Davis, Forward in the Fifth, (859) 986-3696; *sdavis@fif.org*

Kentucky Teacher

MARCH 2001

In this issue...

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

MARCH 2001

Photo by Rick McComb

ACCESS TO LEARNING — Thanks to technology designed to aid people with visual impairments, Millard Elementary School student Michael Hill can use computers to get information, just as his classmates do. For more about Michael's "no barriers" primary class, see Page 1. For information about using assistive technology to meet special learning needs, see Pages 6 and 7.

" *A student who feels unaccepted, unsupported or unsafe at school considers quitting. A school that creates a culture of mutual respect and inclusion for all … has taken a giant step toward keeping every student in school and engaged in learning. … We must shift our focus from intervention at the high school level to prevention throughout all grade levels.* "

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit, on making school culture and dropout prevention statewide priorities in the quest for proficiency. See Page 2.